

# DEVELOP A FIVE PARAGRAPH ESSAY

Thesis adapted from The Longman Writer: Rhetoric, Reader, Handbook

## Introductory Paragraph

Introductions vary in length based on the paper's length and purpose.

1. Avoid a stale or bland beginning that will lose your reader: "Throughout the history of our country there have been many great people." Statements like these are too general and clichéd. Try to begin with a specific image or detail, a statistic, a shocking fact, a quote, a refutation of a common belief, etc.
2. Tell your reader something interesting about your topic and give them a little background.
3. Sum up what you will cover in this essay in one **thesis statement** that covers three or more broad areas of the topic (*each of these areas will be covered in more detail in the paragraphs below*). The thesis should be debatable and engage the reader to think about the topic in a new way. Do not explain; rather, critique and analyze.

## *Example Outline*

### I. Introductory Paragraph

#### *Opening Comments*

Children are no longer growing up with frequent walks to the ice cream store, shared floats at the local diner, or watching a drive-in film starring Carey Grant; they are not even growing up with After-School Specials, "Saved by the Bell" or "Super Mario Brothers."

#### *Thesis Statement*

Because of violent video games, graphic music and movies, and increased pressure from peers and the media, being a parent today is much more difficult than it was a generation ago.

### First Body Paragraph

Use transitions and bridging sentences or phrases to make sure this paragraph flows with the introduction.

1. Write a **topic sentence** explaining the first of the three areas included in your thesis.
2. Write two or more details or examples of this first topic. Examples provide **evidence** for your topic sentence and thesis statement; they consist of facts, details, statistics, personal observation, experience, and expert opinions.
3. Why are these examples important? Discuss what they mean to your overall idea.

## *Example Outline*

### II. Body Paragraph 1

*Topic Sentence (Gives an overview of the paragraph and relates back to the thesis)*

The many advances in technology and society may provide children with more activities; however, they also help to distract children from their studies, thus making it more difficult for a parent to keep children on task.

**A. Specific Detail or Example:** Technology: music: stereos, radios, CD's; television: esp. MTV; computer: internet, computer games

*Analysis of how these details relate to the topic sentence:* Parents and kids struggle with homework because they are distracted by a computer, television, or radio that is in the house.

**B. Specific Detail or Example:** Society: Malls, video arcades, fast food restaurants.

*Analysis of how these details relate to the topic sentence:* Many children want to go out and socialize rather than do their homework, which can lead to more distractions and lower grades.

### **Second Body Paragraph**

Use a smooth bridging sentence or phrase to help the paper flow together.

1. Write a **topic sentence** explaining the second of the three areas included in your thesis. This sentence should show how this second broad topic relates to the first topic in the paragraph above and to the paper's thesis.
2. Now write two or more **details** or **examples** of this second topic.
3. Why are these examples important? Discuss what they mean to your overall idea.

## ***Example Outline***

### **III. Body Paragraph 2**

*Topic Sentence (Gives an overview of the paragraph and relates back to the thesis)*

In addition to every-day distractions, parents must also be aware of the sexually explicit material that is found in the media and how their children are affected by it.

*A. Specific Detail or Example:* In print: magazines and pornographic books

*B. Specific Detail or Example:* In film: seduction scenes and casual sex

*C. Specific Detail or Example:* On television: soap operas, R-rated comedians, R-rated movies on Cable

*D. Specific Detail or Example:* On the Internet: easy-access adult chat rooms and websites

*Analysis of how these details relate to the topic sentence:* The media is filled with misconceptions about sex and sexual relationships; parents have to make sure they inform their children about the fictitious, glamorized, and inappropriate representations of sex.

### Third Body Paragraph

Use a bridging or transition sentence or phrase.

1. Write a **topic sentence** explaining the third of the three areas included in your thesis. This sentence should show how this third broad topic relates to the second topic in the paragraph above and to the paper's thesis.
2. Now write two or more **details** or **examples** of this third topic.
3. Why are these examples important? Discuss what they mean to your overall idea.

### *Example Outline*

#### IV. Body Paragraph 3

*Topic Sentence*(Gives an overview of the paragraph and relates back to the thesis)

Children can be exposed to other dangerous situations during their daily lives and/or through the media.

*A. Specific Detail or Example:* Drugs: the media, news, and peer pressure

*A. Specific Detail or Example:* Alcohol: the media, news, and peer pressure

*C. Specific Detail or Example:* Violent crimes against children: news, media

*Analysis of how these details relate to the topic sentence:* Because drug use, glamorized alcohol use, and violent crimes are increasing, parents must be aware of their children's surroundings and influences in order to teach them how to handle possible scenarios.

### **Concluding Paragraph**

Stay away from typical statements like "In summary" or "In conclusion."

1. Avoid long conclusions and repetition; they will bore your reader.
2. Look over all your subtopics and examples, decide what they have in common, and write about it.
3. Do not introduce new material. Do not copy or repeat your thesis. Your conclusion is simply rounding off your topic.
4. Sum up what you want the reader to think about the topic and examples. You may end with a summary, quotation, statistic, or recommendation for action.

### ***Example Outline***

#### **V. Concluding Paragraph**

*Revisiting Thesis:* Technology and society can have a heavy impact on children's lives, and therefore, on the roles of parents.

*Closing Remarks:* Because of the increasing impact that society, the media, and advanced technology are having on children, parents' tasks to adjust to these changes become more difficult.